

## FRIENDS OF PONTOOSUC LAKE WATERSHED INC.

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Hi to all Friends of Pontoosuc,

### **Subject: Control of Resident Canada Geese**

The board of directors is exploring options for control of our increasingly problematic population of resident Canada Geese. The purpose of this letter is to describe an option we are considering, and to get feedback from you on whether we should proceed. Geese droppings are unpleasant and hazardous on the shore, and in the lake they additionally can cause bacteria counts to rise to unsafe levels and cause swimming prohibitions. The resident geese which live on the lake and elsewhere in the Berkshires have little check on their population, and their numbers have exploded in the past few decades.

The Department of Agriculture (USDA) offers a wildlife damage management program which could be used on our lakes. The two elements of the program are to addle (oil) eggs in nests, and to capture and dispose of (euthanize) some adult birds. The egg oiling is preferable to breaking eggs or disbursing the birds, which would simply result in more eggs being laid. However, if the eggs are oiled the adult will continue to sit on the nest and not lay replacement eggs, and the eggs will not hatch.

An outline for a program for Pontoosuc and Onota Lakes has been developed. A team of wildlife management specialists would visit our lakes 3 times (April, May and June) to oil eggs in all nests they can find, and capture up to 10 adult birds at each lake on each visit. The capture needs to be done on lawns and fields where the birds congregate and graze, and landowner permission is of course required. This program would probably need to be continued for a few years in order to reduce the population to an acceptable level.

The cost of the program for one year would be \$3,000 for USDA plus \$100 license fee for each lake. We propose funding the program with \$1,100 from each lake association, and \$1,000 from the city of Pittsfield.

We believe this program would greatly benefit the lakes and all lake users, but are concerned about negative reaction from our membership and/or the public. So we are asking that you consider the following:

- Do you object to using your dues dollars and/or your tax dollars for this activity?
- Do you have an ethical objection to egg oiling and/or euthanizing adult geese?
- Do you believe that the risk of a public outcry and associated bad publicity would outweigh the benefit of conducting the program described?

I don't expect a response from each of you, but if you have a strong (or even a mild) objection to what is described above, please provide feedback with an email response.

Sincerely,

Lee J. Hauge, President  
Friends of Pontoosuc